

An Ephemeral has Awoken from his
Delusional Sleep

C A R L I S A N A M E O F S O M A N Y

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CARL IS A
NAME,
OF MANY

By: Carl Vincent
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To all the dreamers out there

PROLOGUE

1:00 AM. I got here 5 minutes ago. I'm hustling. I'm worried, and annoyed. It's written all over my face. My heart is throbbing like a drum as I sense a violent cloud entering the harbor of my thoughts.

I'm roaming through rooms; I have no sense of direction. I enter, and close rooms like how a girl changes clothes. Now, I'm hysterical. All of a sudden I feel the floor circling like vultures waiting to

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attack. As I walk I can feel jigsaw pieces of me falling. My body is deteriorating. My head is submerging.

I almost shed a tear.

A realization slaps me in the face, and spit on me for believing I am capable of conjuring a genuine cry. "Found it!" Saved by the bell. My fears and tears as my bullies, are kicked out of a school window.

A Tuesday afternoon had passed.

I shut the door to my room. I lay flat on the bed and decided I was too exhausted to rest. I opened my laptop

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which I'm typing this into. Thinking to myself, "Why would anyone want to hear this?"

Introduction: The Relevance of being Irrelevant

When you type in, and search “11 March 2002,” an article with a preview reads, and I quote “It was Monday, under the sign of Pisces. The US president was George W. Bush (Republican). In that special week of March people in the US were listening to ‘Ain’t it Funny’ by Jennifer Lopez.”

Coincidentally, it was the day that I was born. On that day also, James Tobin,

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an American economist,died. A compensation would be the birth of 361,961 or 251 babies every minute. Hundred thousands of who have grown up to be teenagers in the modern day world,tens of thousands goes to high school,hundreds of thousands suffering poverty, and the rest probably affected by war or had died.

If I had known before I was born that I would eventually become a being who discovers he's not at all any different, I would have ended my life before it even started.Just kidding (or am I?).

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Growing up, long before I watched *The Matrix* or read about Rene Descartes, I played with the idea that I lived in a simulation where all of it was an illusion, and that the only thing that existed and mattered was me.

Everything I do, I convinced myself I'm good at it. Everything I laid my eyes on, I grinned at thinking that someday soon it's going to present itself to me.

It was believable, and for 17 years I firmly stuck on my scalp.

Now that I'm older, I finally have a term for it that I could easily associate myself called delusion

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I was a good kid. I never got myself into trouble at school. I got good grades for paying attention to all of my teachers. At home I was taught to smile to people, and be courteous. I was a cub scout leader for 3 non consecutive years. I loved my cousins. I was called neat, and bubbly by everyone who ever met me.

That was my entire world. That was what I thought of as admirable. "Always be a good role model to yourself, and to everyone else," I would remind myself.

My entire belief system centered on the need to be thought of as good. At an early age, I convinced myself that

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what mattered most was that everyone is happy, might it or might it not include me. I was oriented of getting everybody else's approval of me. People demanded more from me, and I was willing to cater them.

It would have been so perfect that I would have fallen for the illusion for 10 more years, but the day came when it scarred me on the face.

It was when I wasn't announced as a class achiever for the first time. A turn of event that pushed away(what I once thought were) my friends, or was it that first time when I saw proof to be insecure of my body, enough for me to

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lost serenity? A series of events came forth, but all that I can vividly recall is that something definitely happened, and I almost lost myself.

It was harsh. I felt so small. "I lost their respect, I lost it!" When your life centred on the approval of people, it's excruciating to even just imagine the shifting. What you built crumbling before your eyes.

I lost my balance.

I realized during one of my 10 million sessions of thinking: all these years, I let people puppet me. I let them pull the strings attached to my

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head, arms and shoulders. I let them sync their voices to mine. I let them direct and cast in the show of my life. I let them discredit me, and all of it was at my own expense.

That was when I thought "Stop this, this has to change, I had enough!"

It's not just a statement to say, and expect things to move only with your mind like telekinesis. Especially when all that fueled you (me) before were the claps, pats on the head, and nods of people whom I valued.

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Hell it has taken me to write a short book to withstand it, and bring back autonomy that I rightfully should have.

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CHAPTER 1:

Sick Boy is in Denial

I was a fat kid -- to make it derogatory, and truthful of my own description. At 8 I weighted 38kg which at that age was not normal among my peers. Whenever someone would approach me, especially if it were one of my parents' friends, I would get pinched in the face. As a child I would get people to talk about my weight just for being present. I was "Carl Taba" to my classmates, which in a basic sense translates to "Carl Fat."

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At the time I thought of it as a term of endearment. No harm done. I confused the term with cute. In fact, I loved being bubbly and chubby around people, sometimes even on purpose.

I would eat everything that meets my eye. I faked a manic obsession with hamburgers. I faked not being able to run as fast, and my alibi for it was my weight. I used to puff my cheeks just so I would make it fluffier.

I thought of being overweight as a gift. Being one of the few in class to be observed in that way was a good thing. People fell for it, and most loved me for that.

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In retrospect, it was pathetic, and not my proudest move. I also realize now that the reason why i did it was because I was finding a way to fit in,yet be different at the same time. In short, I wanted to be special.

Little did I know, what I had established for years would backfire the day I go to high school.

High School is a new environment for all of us. This is when you start to slowly kill the kid you once were. You decide that certain things are not as cool as you thought they were, and what we liked before should be buried along with our childlike behaviors.

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For me it was the weight. I had to find a way to drop it because suddenly I wasn't surrounded by people who are easily amused by me.

All the people from my 7th Grade class were skinny. May it be girls who act like they want weight (but in reality they were anorexic), or boys who by any food that they account to their stomach, doesn't make them gain any weight.

People wanted to have the breathtaking edge cutting jawline that the actors are designed to have. That bushy eye brows like Jake Gyllenhaal's. Most importantly, the asian complexion

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jigsawed into a slender body like a Korean Oppa.

It was like the Met Gala where public figures represent fashion designers, but instead of public figures, we have students imitating their favorite celebrities.

I was put into an escape room where I had to open one door out of eight, but the catch was it's the end of you when you can't enter all. "It is feasible," 15 year old me would say trying to purge out the last chocolate bar that I ate.

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I did everything to attain the preferred slash most popular body type my age group was looking for. In as early as 14 years old I started limiting what goes in to my mouth.

Don't get me wrong, it's a good practice when you start thinking about the amount of food you eat, but when you start counting calories and carbs, that's when you start up a frontier for a new venture that you know is probably not right; but hey, they're all doing it, so.

I chose to go that road. The road to being skinny (therefore wanted). I was gradually eating less, and exercised excessively.

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As how my 14 year old self reasoning would put it:

Skinny=Confident/Wanted

I thought if I were to engage in a lifestyle that tortures me not to eat, it would all be worth the while when I'm finally reaping the fruit.

So I went 3 years of constantly keeping count of my calorie intake. I would pretend to be full just so to have the excuse not to eat. I would make every single intake count as a threat of getting fat .Surprisingly, I didn't have a problem with trying to keep up with my diet, that is explained by how motivated

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and how urgent loosing weight was for me.

In 11th Grade, in just a matter of 3 months I drastically lost a lot of weight. This was when I had new classmates. This was when I was exposed to a lot of things which I saw was a calling to lose even more weight.

I always felt like I was gonna pass out.

At this time I even published an article on my blog explaining to people how “normal” it was for me to lose that much weight. That in my case, it was “hereditary.” I was trying to stir the story to my side.

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I was insatiable. Nothing satisfied me. I was fed up of lifestyle magazines featuring men having great physique, and successful careers. With that I associated success as a direct effect of having a Greek God body.

I was intimidated by almost everything that is living and successful. I wanted more than what I have; my mind was restless of all its ambition.

I would look at myself everyday in the mirror for at least a couple of hours. My reflection, day by day, served as an ammunition to kill my light on little cat feet. Suddenly, it wasn't just about physique anymore, it was my fucking

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face! I hated my face. I always thought that it was bloated and was proportioned like those of the gnomes.

My eyes were too small and too Asian (racism aside). I felt so mediocre and defeated. I tell you, I can make a 10 page thick roast speech for my face; although I'd be long dead by a thousand cuts before I finish.

Side note: I was attempting to conjure a falling action, but it would all be lying.

I'm okay now, or at least, better. I find myself 3 times stronger than I was. Every now and then, when I look in the mirror too much, I would still see the

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same person that I was years ago before I even started dieting. The vulnerable and fluff cheeked kid I was and how tricked I was of believing that I was, by subjectivity, cute.

I would have a tendency to try not to eat. I would convince myself sometimes in the evening to skip dinner for as my reasoning goes, I could probably die in my sleep for eating. Or in the morning, when breakfast is all wheat and carbohydrates, I would eat as little as possible to not try and bloat my face (again). I drink dramatic amounts of water. I eat vegetables voluntarily because I'm threatened by meat. I cry

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some times thinking I'm not special enough to have a place in this world.

With all the spare time in my arbitrarily designed world, where I fear that I could lose everything with just one ham sandwich, I'm trapped, but I try to break free.

I eat, now (conditionally), but there was a time I didn't and it was horrific. The crazy thing is that part of me might still crawl up to the surface in one of my worst times.

I know there are former oversized guy or girl out there who can relate to

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this as much as I do. What can I say, weight can sometimes be a bitch.

Just wanted this to be out there, and knocking on people's door saying "you can talk to me or anyone about this issue cause you are not alone." We are getting better, we should.

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CHAPTER 2:

Swimming Pool in Liverpool

At eight I rode a cab. To my recollection it was one of the first times i was by myself as a kid without no one else with me but the peddler.

I recall being verbally harassed by the driver. He (the peddler) said things like "you're so cute that I could squeeze you," escalating to sentences that makes you fear about your safety "I want to bring you home and hide you." While it was a nice gesture, as people would

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satirically say, at that moment I felt vulnerable of being abducted. My heart was pounding. I recall attempting to jump from the cab, and trying to run as fast as I could from him.

You can't imagine the relief that took shape in my face when I finally have arrived at my destination. The moment i felt my feet down the ground as I handed him the fee,was the moment I knew this was just the start of it, and damn was I right.

I have had experienced sexual harassment in the past. The latest record of it happened just 2 weeks ago from when I am writing. I never really

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knew I was taken advantage of before I knew that sexual assault could also happen to men. So I was a kid easy to fool.

Defining sexual assault or harassment, is debatable and ambiguous, and has a tendency to favor more on girls than on boys. Like when a boy intentionally puts his hand under a girls skirt, he's a pervert, but when a guy does the same exact behavior to the same sex, he's just joking.

There is no denying of the abundance of these cases in women, but that does not necessarily guarantee

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that there's zero chance happening it to men.

I would say that the most uncomfortable things that happened to me were the doings of men, but the hardest part to process for me is the fact that most of it involved people I thought I knew, people whom I presumed were friends with me.

You never really know the feeling till someone grabbed you by the shorts and cupped you, and contemplate "do I allow that?" But how could you ever stop them when you already told them NO, STOP, PLEASE multiple times before. You're frozen in that moment.

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You're defenseless, and for months on end you would hate yourself for not trying enough to stop them (but you did).

Now you entered a new state of mind, the one in which you're stuck to everyday wondering what difference it would make if you were just more capable. You're in it everyday, for the rest of your life.

The worst part of it all is that it keeps on happening. No it's not just for a one time, from any point in your life you're susceptible of it happening again (and again). You can't sleep near anyone anymore because the last time that it

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happened, in the middle of the night you were stripped, and was more than uncomfortable and humiliated that you pretended to remain asleep through the whole thing.

I know to guys it's simply just their way of joking, but they will never understand how filthy you think you are just because of something that is in one's control, but not in yours.

You tried and reported an incident to a counselor but what she did was just give a person a warning, you still see them and talk to them. As a matter of fact just this month one of them grabbed you inappropriately.

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You tried to contain your face from anger and humiliation that it accumulated to crying all evening. You're friends with them now, so how could this happen? How could you let this happen? Of course, they were joking, but was it funny that I needed to fear for my safety?

In your head, you perceive everyone as a threat that you can't trust anyone anymore especially boys. You're not friends with them in long term because of this. In your head you're so small like a spec of dust waiting to be blown by one violent wind into a whirlwind of misery. "you're not strong as you think you are, you're a fraud."

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I was silenced. Mostly not by anyone, but by the fear of being questioned and talked about. I would imagine a crowd full of people I know, passing looks of disgust that would humiliate me, motivating me to find a way to become invisible. I was so well aware of the backlash that what I could only put front was a face of i-have-no-problem-with-this-im-happy.

Rape jokes certainly didn't help. I didn't think that all find them funny. When you're in a situation, or more like a verge of falling out of the group, you have no option but to laugh at the things they laugh about. What's popular is your only choice not being scrutinized

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and labeled "not fun." I hated people who undermine the seriousness of this sensitive topic.

That's why, in my early teens, I was very vocal about supporting rights of woman. Why? Because I resonated with their experiences more than with men. There came a time when I was a full pledged, force to be reckoned with feminist hero (I had to laugh) I remembered being loud and vocally projected, driven by my ideas and passion to attain equality.

The saddest realization was that i was just an ally. I was supposed to be a

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supposed default beneficiary, but in my own circumstance I was a prey.

Writing this, and sharing this experience to the world demanded me to talk out of popularity. No man that I know from where I belong talks about this. I didn't know and wasn't sure if anyone like me is out there.

As much as I wanted to make this a private matter, I also wanted to talk about it because this kind of behavior is unacceptable, and it should be stopped. It ruins people to the extent that they don't feel safe around people anymore. It's not right to blame yourself or someone else of being weak and unable

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to defend themselves because it perpetuates the concept of victim blaming, and no corrective means in the account of the doer ever comes into the light. We should recognize everyone a potential victim regardless of an existing criteria, like gender.

INTERLUDE

2/7/19

Done me in blue, but painted me
golden.

One isn't true, if love doesn't find you.
Tainted burden, somehow got chosen,
lucky was I, my bruises were glue.

Under the street lights we dwell in
secret,

our hands, both on the waist of each
other.

Skin to eyes, eyes to skin meets the
circuit.

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Electrified , but shouldn't have seen it.

Forget me not, we lost all vivid dreams,
in halls of the dark where all the witches
scream.

You did a favor, lust was it's flavor.
Gone was my trace, cause you're not my
saviour

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CHAPTER 3:

The Spectators and the Show King

I made peace with the fact that death is inevitable and comes unexpected; I was just made aware that I'm practically dying starting the day I was born, and now I know that.

What I did not know and I did not approve of in the first place was the lifelessness that I would feel even when I'm still alive.

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I'm talking about, having no control and essence in your life. People determining what is right for you, and what is not. What you should do, and what you should stay away from. There exist this social construct wherein you would have to reform your pentagonal shape to fit into a quadratic hole because it's what the normal is.

I had to deconstruct myself in the approval of people. There are times in my life when if I go below their level of expectations, I would easily equal to nothing to them.

I used to be no one in high school after I wasn't announce for the first time

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as an honor student. I would skip classes, not talk to people (or talk to them, then they eventually shut me out), just let a day slipped and do nothing about it.

I didn't know it, but I'm pretty sure back then I was lowkey depressed. I was constantly thinking of the thought of dying. I didn't have anyone else to talk to. To sum it up I was not in a good place in my life during those times.

I changed after 9th Grade A.K.A the first push of encouragement in my teenage life. I became ,just like any other, a competitive student.

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I would put on the work, and study really hard on tests just so I would be declared as the highest. I would count my grades the same manner I counted my calories--- obnoxiously excessive scrutiny. I needed to be on top every single time. When I wasn't, I would punish myself by subconsciously bullying me into believing "She's smarter than you, thank you for trying." This would make me angry and arrogant.

With my life I wasn't contented. The American Dream enforces the idea that you have to work twice or thrice as hard. There was always a room for more of anything. There is no such thing as "You

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had enough," because why then would people still not be impressed with your success, why would they still not want to tolerate you?

"I have to do this again for people to like me even more," this is what I used to say right after receiving a coveted honor or achieving a successful week run(that's right I kept track). Success and recognition preceded me. The urge to always be the best was what nudged me in a variable dependent environment.

The truth of wanting success is that whatever you do, you are still not meeting 1-3 criteria, and it is impossible to.

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I did what they asked me. I reached the summit of my academic life.

Teachers always say that if you work hard for a goal, when it is achieved you will feel fulfillment. I never, not even remotely, felt fulfilled with what I did at school. Nothing ever satisfied me.

"You're at #1 position, again! Yehey," and after the sugar rush release of dopamine, 2 minutes later i feel nothing but a need for more.

In my head I was aimlessly drifting. I wanted to be happy. I was always told to loosen up and stop caring about my grades, but does happiness really have to be flunking in school? I didn't want

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that for myself. Same on that topic, what do I really want? What is something that I want to succeed in without hurting myself?

All I knew was that if I keep going the same route, with the same pacing, and the same goal-- to impress people, I would barely make it out alive(no pun).

I knew that I wasn't benefiting from this, people were. My groupmates depended on me like a nest draped to a branch. My parents expected too much of me more than what I am sanely capable of. Lastly, it was my own ego who convinced me that I was the best in anything. That I quote unquote

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"mattered more than anyone else.". I planted the idea in my head. I watered it everyday because I was fooled to believe that I could pick apples the time that it's fully grown. Turns out it was never a tree, just grass.

All this time I have been trying to convince everyone how much of a great person I am by presenting them with achievements. I I poured the dignity and respect out of me.

Do this;do that;not the way you do it;why can't you be more like her?

Answer me this, when can we be more like ourselves? Every time we are

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blinded by the thought of being approved, the more we feel empty.
People are amused by you but your appraisal to your self: Not good enough.

*I am weak, mediocre,
unwanted, unworthy, tragic, and first to
be eaten in a stampede*

Human as we are, have two coinciding nature: The Archer, The Prey
We build our ego from applause, and we're the fastest and strongest force to deteriorate it using both the boos, and self sabotage.

EPILOGUE

I have a name, used by so many that in birth I was already a part of the human race. What makes me different is the choices that I have made and is still making, the life experiences both lost and triumphs, and what I value.

Don't let anyone, not even yourself, pollute your thoughts into believing that the only form of happiness is being on a stage and receiving ovations. Don't let them fool you that the only form of success is validation.

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If you're a Carl, not by name, but by experience, you're not going to be stuck there forever. You're the epitome of happy life in process.

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Author's Note

Writing *Carl is a name of many* demanded me to be vocal, and honest. I would never have done it without the inspiration I have drawn from *Miss Americana Documentary*.

Being 18 to me means liberation, and for me to have that is to voluntarily open a discussion with people. I figured the best way to do it is through inspiring people at the same time.

Carl Vincent Fua Florano

About the Author

Carl Vincent Florano is an amateur 18 year old senior high school student who was born on March 11, 2002.

In 2019, he published a self titled blog where he posted self written/non collaborated contents which have accumulated nearly 5,000 unique visitors.

He plans to pursue writing as a profession by studying AB English in college.

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